## A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR.

By Frances Ridley Havergal.

Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
In living echoes of thy tone;
As thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children lost and lone.

O strengthen me, that while I stand
Firm on the rock, and strong in thee,
I may stretch out a loving hand
To wrestlers with the troubled sea.

O teach me, Lord, that I may teach
The precious things thou dost impart;
And wing my words, that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart.

O give thine own sweet rest to me,
That I may speak with soothing power
A word in season, as from thee,
To weary ones in needful hour.

O fill with thy fullness, Lord,
Until my very heart o'erflow
In kindling thought and glowing word,
Thy love to tell, thy praise to show.

O use me, Lord, use even me,
Just as thou wilt, and when, and where;
Until thy blessed face I see,
Thy rest, thy joy, thy glory share.

For Presbyterian of the South.

## THE WRITINGS OF JOHN CALVIN.

By Rev. J. A. Gordon.

In one of Scott's novels the graphic account is given of the singular contest between Richard Coeur de Lion and the great Moslem warrior, the Saladin. The latter drew his scimeter of perfect Damascus steel, sharpened to an almost incredible keenness of edge, held it with edge upturned, placed a gauze-like veil of finest silken texture upon it, so light that it floated in the air, then with a quick motion he drew the keen blade from underneath and the veil floated slowly to the ground in two parts.

Richard Coeur de Lion unbuckled the heavy iron mace which hung at his side, the handle of which was more than an inch in diameter. Standing it up in the midst of the admiring group of celebrated warriors, he seized his great broadsword and whirling it above his head, with one mighty stroke, ere the mace could fall to the ground, severed the heavy bar of iron, and not a nick could be found in the edge of his superb weapon.

But the pen of the little sick man of Geneva was keener by far than Saladin's famous Damascus blade, and mightier by far than the ponderous broadsword of the warrior king, Richard Coeur de Lion. Calvin's pen was exceedingly busy. When we take into consideration the labors that he accomplished, we marvel that he could find time for any composition. But in the comparatively brief compass of his life his writings were voluminous. I shall not attempt in this brief paper to review in any sense his works, but merely to point out in a general way some points that may be of interest and that may assist us in gaining a better understanding of the man behind the pen. As to the mechanical part of Calvin's works, his style of composition, I have very little to say, as he wrote exclusively in Latin and French, and I will have to admit with confusion of face that I have not followed Calvin in the original through all of his works. Moreover, my own Latinity is not sufficiently Ciceronian to render me a capable judge of Latin style. D'Alembert, the noted French scholar and linguist, says: "Calvin justly enjoyed a distinguished reputation, and was a scholar of the first order. He wrote with as much elegance in Latin as a dead language admits; and the extraordinary purity of his French style is even now admired by our skillful critics, and gives his writings a decided superiority over the greatest part of his contemporaries." His Latin style is by competent critics declared to be better than that of any Christian writer since Tertullian. Even the intensely bitter critic, the Roman Catholic Audin, says of him: "Never does the proper word fail him, he calls and it comes." George Park Fisher, of Yale University, says of Calvin's "Institutes": "They were not only a contribution to theology, but also to literature. By the dignified and forcible style in which they were written, they exercised a profound influence in shaping modern French prose. The Latin edition is also distinguished for the classical purity of its language." Dr. Paul Henry, of Berlin, says: "Calvin's style, even in his correspondence, is almost always classical through its very simplicity. The character of a man may be commonly discovered in his style; this, at least, was the case with Calvin. In his mode of writing we recognize the same simplicity and candor which he shows in his inward and outward life. As he wrote without circumlocution, so spoke he in his life. It was with him not nature only, but principle, to think and to write clearly in short, intelligible sentences. He scarcely ever indulged in long periods which would have been difficult to the comprehension of a popular assemblage."

As we have before remarked, Calvin's pen was very prolific. We cannot view the work accomplished by this wonderful man without genuine astonishment. On alternating weeks he preached every day, besides delivering three theological lectures every week before the keen, alert students who flocked to Geneva from all parts of Europe, among them such men as John Knox. With all the intense zeal of his nature he devoted his superb talents to the public welfare, and to this day the impress of his master mind and will are to be clearly traced in some of our most highly prized privileges and blessings. Among these we may mention, civil liberty, the separation of Church and State, and the consequent religious liberty, Presbyterianism in Church government, and the consequent republican form of civil government, and last, but not least, in the system of education, which at an enormous expenditure of care and time and money he formulated for the youth of Geneva, we find the principles and the crude essence of the great public school system of our country.

At the close of each arduous day, filled often with nerve-racking contests that called for gigantic expenditures of will and brain power, far into the night he would speed his tireless pen. I need not mention here